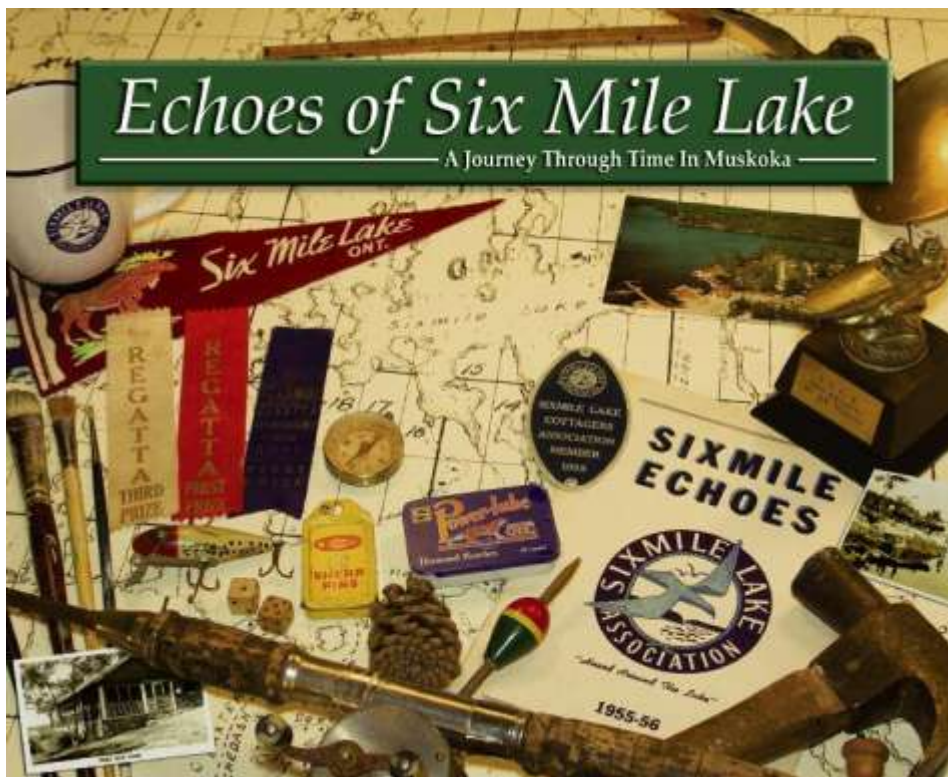


Recording Your Lake History

by Mary Boddy

In 2007, Six Mile Lake decided it was time to record their lake history by collecting old photos, maps, stories and other memorabilia from their lake's early pioneer families. For two summers, a group of volunteer cottagers with no prior experience started a project that would result in an award winning, 300 page hard-cover book. The book has been a real hit with cottagers. Families have ordered multiple copies, as everyone wants their own!



To see sample pages from *Echoes of Six Mile Lake: A Journey Through Time in Muskoka*, visit the lake website at: sixmilelake.net

How did they do it?

Six Mile Lake has a very active Cottagers Association which sends out 3 newsletters a year to 850 cottagers, members or not. A cottage directory is produced every 2 years for those who are members. With advance advertising, over 900 books were prepaid, and to date 90% of the 1500 copies are sold out. The book project was completely self-funded.

How can you start a book for your lake?

Six Mile Lake recommends organizing a small group of volunteers who know the lake well. Divide the lake into areas and draw up a list of your oldest cottage families. Then

make some phone calls and start your visits. Weekends are best obviously and there are not many of them in a summer, so summer time is actually short.

A picture is worth a thousand words!

The most important and first thing a team should concentrate on are the old photos. Try to find one volunteer to scan the photos (at 300dpi at a minimum and on the colour setting – even if they are old black and white photos), label them by family name and store them in computer files. Return all photos as soon as possible to the owners. Make sure you make notes on who are in the photos, the year and where on the lake they were taken. You can photocopy the photos as well as scan them, so that you can make notes on the photocopies. Another suggestion is to find a photographer or two on the lake who will volunteer to photograph and document original buildings on your lake. You will need to draw up a copyright permission release form that will need to be signed by your contributing property owners.

Want more advice?

If you are interested in help getting started, contact Mary Boddy at mfboddy@netscape.ca. Mary is willing to speak to your group and offer advice for a large or small book project.

A very practical step by step presentation would cover topics on:

- how to interview
- selecting the right team of volunteers
- financing
- researching
- advertising
- fundraising
- team building
- printing
- setting goals and timelines.

One last suggestion is to start small and start now, as history is lost over time.

Get ready for a fabulously rewarding experience!

